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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: review of further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Statement submitted by International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.5/2005/1.



Introduction

The creation of stable employment and decent work is an urgent task for government policy makers and the private sector in countries both of the north and the south. In 2000, one third of the world's labor force or about one billion people did not have such jobs. This number included 160 million unemployed, 300 million underemployed and about 530 million workers who were unable to earn enough money to keep their families above the poverty line. By the end of 2002, the world unemployment rate had increased and the total number of unemployed reached a new peak of 180 million. Two developments are especially noteworthy in this context. First, women and youth are particularly hard hit by the employment crisis. Second, many unemployed were pushed into informal, precarious forms of work which provide no social security coverage in many countries.

We, therefore, recommend that the review of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme for Action give ample consideration to the following:

1. Promoting macroeconomic policies for decent work and policy coherence for development

The coordination of macroeconomic policies, principally trade and finance, has shifted away from the UN-led follow-up mechanisms and towards the multilateral trade and financial institutions. A key strategic policy objective would be to coordinate macroeconomic, trade and investment policies and multilateral agreements, so that they serve the social and sustainable development objectives and human rights standards of the UN. It would be especially important to pursue the policy objective of decent work for all women and men, which the ILO defines as work that is rewarded with at least a decent living wage, in safe working conditions, and that recognizes workers' rights, and the need for social dialogue. The recommendations and follow up processes of the recently launched World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization report can contribute to reaching this goal. They should be incorporated into the follow-up process of the Copenhagen + 10 Review.

2. Integrating social standards in economic, financial and trade policy

Social standards, especially core labor standards, are a critical component of policies aimed at protecting people, especially women and children, from bearing the 'social costs' of globalization. Key to such an approach is the promotion of a regulatory framework whereby countries ratify and implement the core ILO Conventions enshrined in the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, thereby protecting children from exploitative child labour, ensuring non-discrimination and gender equality in employment, and recognizing workers' rights to be represented by trade unions, and to be covered by collective agreements.

The multilateral financial and trade institutions must also ensure that their policies promote rather than undermine these core standards, and social policies. Promoting dialogue between governments, employers, trade unions and other civil society organizations, on social and employment policies is also key. This involves the adoption of the collective bargaining process to ensure economic justice. Workers should themselves receive a fair share of the productivity gains

of their labour and adequate social protection, as well as social insurance against job-related risks. Therefore, social standards need to be embedded in international economic, financial and trade policies.

3. Addressing unpaid work and informal work

Women's unpaid work is invisible in the economy. In addition to household and caring work, women's often-unpaid activity in small-sized family enterprises is not sufficiently recognized. The growing and highly heterogeneous informal sector, especially in developing countries, is another issue that needs to be addressed adequately. Workers in the informal sector are highly vulnerable, engaging in precarious work that fails to earn them a living wage, while unreliable institutional arrangements result in a lack of social protection. The negative "social costs" of globalization are particularly keenly felt in this sector.

4. Youth and Education: An economic and social imperative

According to the ILO more than 80 million young women and men are unemployed. They account for 47% of all people unemployed worldwide. Their entry into the labour market could be an enormous boon for economic and social development and offer a great opportunity for their contributing to society. For this to happen, much more serious attention needs to be given to the education and training of young people for the job market.

Education empowers young people, especially girls, to be better able to serve their own needs and contribute to their communities. Investment in employment-oriented education and the creation of decent work for the young foster both social development and the longer-term sustainable development by increasing productivity and supporting the growth of national economies. Education also nourishes citizenship, by giving students the knowledge to influence the nature and direction of society, and to engage in political life as adults. (EFA Monitoring Report 2003-04).

5. Provide opportunities to older populations

Older populations are a physical and intellectual resource making major contributions to economies and societies worldwide. As people continue to live longer and healthier lives, we must ensure that there are opportunities for them to continue contributing to society. Those who want to or need to work into later years should not be prevented from doing so. Further, improved health and intellectual vitality of older workers makes them an important and largely untapped resource to economies. Additionally, utilizing the skills and experiences of older workers not only can ease pressure on public pension and other systems, but can give older persons a sense of meaning and purpose, as well as the opportunity to remain active and contributing members of society. Finally, governments, employers and individuals need to realize the continued employment opportunities for aging populations as one of the pillars of individual and national economic security.

This statement is endorsed and supported by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council:

AARP

Dominican Leadership Conference

International Association of Schools of Social Work

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
